

West Coast action to support dockworkers

Solidarity caravan fights for ILWU

By Terri Kay
Oakland, Calif.

Jan. 2 — International Longshore and Warehouse Union rank-and-file members and the Occupy movements in Longview, Wash.; Portland, Ore.; Seattle; Oakland, Calif.; Los Angeles and other West Coast cities are organizing to blockade a grain ship arriving in Longview sometime in January. This ship is supposed to be loaded by a non-ILWU crew with cargo from the new EGT export terminal. The date won't be known until three to four days in advance.

There is a war going on against dockworkers and their families in Longview, Wash. Members of ILWU Local 21 have been arrested, beaten and their homes raided. They are fighting to protect their union jobs against EGT, which is trying to break the ILWU's coastwide contract, established after the 1934 San Francisco general strike and West Coast Maritime strike.

EGT and its majority partner, Bunge NA, want to bust the ILWU, one of the most militant, progressive unions in the U.S. EGT has broken the union's contract with the Port of Longview and is using scab labor at its export grain terminal. On Sept. 8, hundreds of angry Longshore workers charged through the gates, and EGT claims that grain was dumped from a 107-car train and a cyclone fence was torn down.

This struggle is occurring at a time when national union membership has dropped to a 70-year low of 11.9 percent, with 6.9 percent of private sector workers in unions. EGT's actions are part of the ruling-class attack to drive us all to the bottom. Even with low union membership rates, national median weekly wages for union members are \$917, compared to \$717 for workers not in unions.

The 1% not only wants to take away that extra \$200 from the remaining 14.7 million unionized workers, but wants to destroy all unions, especially the militant ILWU, to keep us from organizing to take back what is rightfully ours.

Fighting Wall Street on the waterfront

EGT — a joint venture between U.S.-based Bunge NA, Japanese-based Itochu and Korean-based STX Pan Ocean — is part of the 1%. If EGT is successful in its attack on the ILWU in Longview, that will have a ripple effect on all port workers on the West Coast.

The ILWU is a democratic, bottom-up union with an activist rank and file. It has a strong history of support for community issues — standing up against apartheid

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WE MARCH FOR JOBS FOR ALL NOW!

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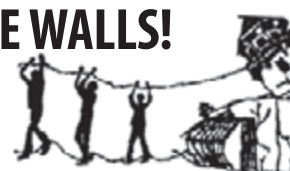
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**DEMAND JOBS OR INCOME NOW
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Extend & Expand Unemployment Benefits
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TEAR DOWN THE WALLS!

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- Free Mumia



- Prison privatization

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LARRY HOLMES

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Homeless deaths honored at memorial



PHILADELPHIA

More than 122 deaths of homeless people were recorded on the streets of Philadelphia in the last year. Each one of their names, including two John Does, was solemnly read at an outdoor memorial on a rainy Dec. 21 evening. Activists also held aloft signs bearing many of the names. The commemoration featured speakers, poets and music, with an overall theme of a renewed commitment to end homelessness.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

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Pelican Bay prisoners: ‘This fight is far from over!’

The following excerpted statement was issued by the Pelican Bay prisoners who went on hunger strike in 2011 to protest conditions in the “high-security” supermax housing units.

A shout-out of respect and solidarity from the Pelican Bay State Prison Short Corridor Collective to all similarly situated prisoners, subject to the continuing torturous conditions of confinement in these barbaric SHU and Ad-Seg [Special Housing Unit and Administrative Segregation] units across this country and around the world.

This is our update of where things currently stand and where we’re going with this struggle for an end to draconian policies and practices summarized in our “Formal Complaint” (and many related documents published and posted online since early 2011).

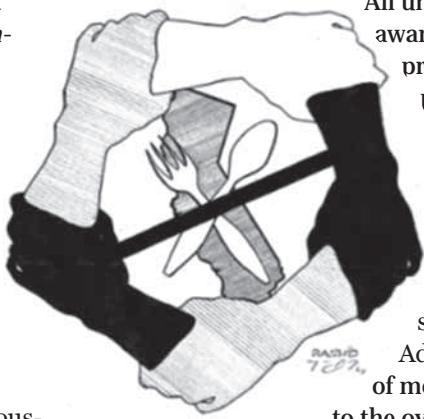
Beginning in early 2010, the Collective initiated action to educate people and bring widespread exposure to the 25+ years of ongoing progressive human rights violations going unchecked here in the California Department of Corruption. Via dissemination of our formal complaint to hundreds of people, organizations, lawmakers, [California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Secretary Matthew] Cate, etc., we also sought support and meaningful change.

The response by Secretary Cate was, “File an inmate appeal” (collectively, we’d filed thousands). Therefore, after much consideration and dialogue, the Collective decided to take the fight to the next level via peaceful protest in the form of hunger strike.

In early 2011 we again sought to educate people about the ongoing torture prevalent in these solitary confinement units, pointing out our position that the administrative grievance process is a sham, and that the court system has [ignored] blatantly illegal practices — leaving us with no other meaningful avenue for obtaining relief, other than to put our lives on the line and thereby draw the line via collective action.

We believed this was the only fully advantageous way for us to expose such outrageous abuse of state power to the world and gain the outside support needed to help force real change.

We requested support in the form of asking people to write letters to those in power. We received more support than we ever expected, in the form of letters, rallies and hunger strike “participants” — more than 18,000 similarly situated prisoners, and some people on the outside!



GRAPHIC: RASHID JOHNSON

All united in solidarity, with a collective awareness — that the draconian torture practices described in our formal complaint are prevalent across the land; and that, united in peaceful action, we have the power to force changes. The hunger strike actions of 2011 achieved some success, in the form of mainstream worldwide exposure; solid, continuing outside support; some small improvements to SHU/Ad-Seg unit conditions; and assurances of more meaningful, substantive changes to the overall policies and practices regarding basis for placement and amount of time spent in such units; a substantive review of all prisoners’ files per the new criteria; and more changes to the actual conditions in such units.

However, this fight is far from over! The second hunger strike action was suspended in mid-October in response to a top CDCR administrator’s presentation that the substantive changes would be finalized and provided to the “stakeholders” within 60 days for comment. To date, CDCR hasn’t produced anything regarding SHU/Ad-Seg policy changes; and PBSP’s warden has not even replied to the two memos we’ve sent him concerning additional issues.

Naturally, many people are not happy about CDCR’s failure to abide by their word — again — and are asking, “What’s the next move in this struggle?”

Based on our collective discussions, our response is that people need to remain focused and continue to apply pressure on CDCR via letters, emails, faxes, etc., summarizing the continuing core demands. There’s real power in numbers!

It’s important for everyone to stay objective and on the same page. Remember — united we win, divided we lose. If we don’t see real substantive changes within the next six months, we’ll have to re-evaluate our position.

Additionally, now is a good time for people to start a dialogue about changing the climate in these level IV mainlines [general prison populations]. As it stands now, these lines are warehouses, with all the money meant for rehabilitation programs going into guards’ pockets.

It’s in all of our best interests to change this in a big way, and thereby force CDCR to open these lines up and provide all of us with the programs and rehabilitative services that we all should have coming to us!

Respect and solidarity,

**T. Ashker, A. Castellanos,
Sitawa (s/n Dewberry), A. Guillen**

Visit prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com.

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Joint rally honors Oscar Grant & the fight against police brutality

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

Marching from Oscar Grant Plaza to the Fruitvale Bay Area Rapid Transit Plaza, hundreds of people rallied for justice for Oscar Grant and all victims of police brutality and murder on Jan. 1.

Just three years ago, Grant, a 19-year-old Black youth, was shot and killed by BART police as he was waiting with friends for the train at the Fruitvale BART station. Personal video footage showed that Grant was physically restrained by other BART police when officer Johannes Mehserle shot him. While Mehserle was eventually prosecuted and found guilty, he received a very light sentence for the cold-blooded murder.

Grant's death has fueled a broad movement in Oakland and around the state against the racist police shootings of young people of color. The Jan. 1 rally was organized by the Oscar Grant Committee, Occupy Oakland and Bring the Ruckus and reflected the unity among these groups.

Following a short rally at Oscar Grant Plaza in front of City Hall (originally Frank Ogawa Plaza), more than 300 demonstrators started a several-mile march to the Fruitvale BART station. The march was well received as it passed through several residential neighborhoods. The Oakland police remained in the background as organizers from Occupy Oakland, on foot and on bicycle, directed the crowd through the streets.

Speakers at the final rally included Grant's mother, Wanda Johnson, and her brother, Uncle Bobby (Cephus Johnson). The family had held a prayer vigil earlier that day at the BART station, and then came over to the rally. Johnson



Jan. 1, Oakland, Calif.

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

thanked everyone for attending the protest. "The fight is not over. Stand up for what you believe," she challenged the demonstrators.

Uncle Bobby reminded everyone that before Occupy Oakland, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union had shut down the Port of Oakland to demand justice for Oscar Grant. "We have to tie together both movements and keep working together," Johnson said.

Jack Bryson, whose two sons were

with Grant when he was killed, thanked Occupy Oakland for its solidarity in the struggle against police brutality and murder. He reminded the crowd that one of Occupy Oakland's first acts was to rename Frank Ogawa Plaza in honor of Grant.

The rally became a speakout for family members whose children had been killed by local police. Khalid Shakur, an Oakland resident and Occupy organizer, called on everyone to get involved in the fightback against the 1%. □

THE CRIME OF PRIVATIZED PRISONS

By Lamont Lilly

Here in the U.S., our "land of the free," there are approximately 130,000 inmates now housed in privately owned prisons. It's a foul stench within a justice system that leads the world in number of people incarcerated within a state, federal or private institution. The latest tally of 2 million equals 25 percent of the globe's incarcerated population.

This massive waste of human life is commonly known as the prison-industrial complex, with an even more oppressive current now being led from the top down by the highly profitable prison privatization movement. Its roots can be traced back to Ronald Reagan's "War on Drugs" and tougher sentencing platform in the 1980s.

Due to policymakers' concerns about prison overcrowding, in 1984 the Corrections Corporation of America was contracted to oversee its first facility in Hamilton County, Tenn. The transition set a federal precedent for private control of correctional institutes.

Though depicted as cost-saving, efficient operations, independent studies suggest the contrary. A lack of regulation permits smaller staff and inadequate training, which in turn produces more violent and consistently unstable conditions for prisoners. Sustainable medical care has come into question, as private prisons like the George W. Hill Center, Walnut Grove Youth Facility and New Castle Correctional Institute have garnered a barrage of recent scrutiny over the deaths of dozens of inmates. Private prisons have also proven to be just as costly to construct as publicly run prisons.

The same companies grossing billions from the capture and incarceration of people in the U.S. — mostly poor, Black and Latino/a — are the same brokers who donate millions to state senators, school boards, mayors and police chiefs. It's no secret that private firms such as The GEO Group authorize direct appeals to federal legislation like "three strikes" and man-

datory minimum sentencing. Common sense says such merging complexities spell corruption.

Meanwhile, predatory investors like Wells Fargo, American Express and Merrill Lynch reap robust returns on private bond purchases — these greed-driven giants literally banking on the results of Black and Latino/a youth and their 4th grade test scores. (The Children's Defense Fund details this association through its Cradle to Prison Pipeline Campaign.) Additional stakeholders include a slew of corporate sponsors: Nordstrom's, Microsoft, IBM, Revlon, Target, Dell, Hewlett-Packard and even AT&T.

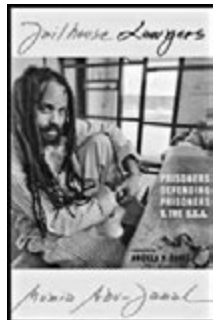
Fact is, people in the U.S. aren't committing more crime; we're doing more time because it pays. We're talking Third-World sweatshops disguised as rehab programs, possibly in your home state! This human rights infringement isn't punishing someone who does wrong; it's profiting from the pain of that punishment, exploiting the limited freedoms of inhumane confinement, maximizing such restrictive conditions for capital gain — the same profits that merely perpetuate the incarceration of more people for longer periods of time.

While poverty in the U.S. continues to plague the general public, job positions are going for \$1 an hour in the private prison sector. No wonder we can't find jobs; our furniture and home appliances are being produced by rent-a-slaves. Such control sounds eerily similar to the Black Belt's Convict Lease System of the late 1800s, a state-run practice throughout the South that forcibly extracted free labor from newly emancipated slaves deemed "criminal."

If this is what big business means by "Made in America," I don't want *no* parts of it.

Lilly is a contributing editor at the Triangle Free Press and recently served as an organizer with Cynthia McKinney's Report from Libya Tour. He is also a Human Rights Delegate with Witness for Peace.

Out of the hole then Keep pressure on to free Mumia!



Although Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams dropped the death sentence on Dec. 7, Mumia Abu-Jamal remains in administrative custody since being transferred from SCI Greene to SCI Mahanoy on Dec. 14. He has been kept isolated from the general population, with limited phone access and visits with family still conducted behind glass walls.

While in administrative custody, Abu-Jamal is technically in "the hole," with absolutely no human contact. His belongings were limited to eight sheets of paper and eight envelopes and a rubber pen. He gets only one hour in the yard and one visitor a week. At night, the lights in his cell are dimmed only slightly and remain on all day.

According to Pam Africa, with International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia, Abu-Jamal is being told that he can't be released to general population until he comes to court in Philadelphia where a judge will say his sentence has been changed from death to life in prison. "The prison administration says they can't move him because they don't have the signed paperwork, but if this is the case why isn't he still in SCI Greene?" Africa said.

Africa told Workers World, "When they moved Mumia to Mahanoy, he was surrounded by guards carrying machine guns, shackled, handcuffed and forced to leave all his belongings. Why would he put himself through all this again to come to Philadelphia to have a judge tell him what he

already knows? Mumia should have been in general population since 2001, when Judge Yohn overturned the death penalty, but the DA's office held him on death row for a decade while it filed losing appeals."

Africa reported that Abu-Jamal is already experiencing solidarity from fellow prisoners. "People at the prison are giving him paper. One young prisoner wrote a poem for him."

Efforts to win Abu-Jamal's full release from prison are continuing with an international campaign focusing on violations of the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution against cruel and unlawful punishment for wrongfully holding him on death row for 30 years. The campaign will also challenge Abu-Jamal's continued imprisonment as a violation of international law, signed on to by the U.S., banning the practice of prolonged solitary confinement.

A second campaign will put unrelenting public pressure on the DA's office based on the merits of Abu-Jamal's grounds for release, drawing on international human rights standards and international support. This effort includes establishing an Occupy for Justice movement to fight against police brutality and the prison-industrial complex. Supporters will meet in Philadelphia on Jan. 8 to take up the next phase of these struggles. For information, contact freemumia.com or call 267-760-7344.

—Betsey Piette

Mumia's book "Jailhouse Lawyers" is available at: freemumia.com/?page_id=60 and bookstores around the country

Protest hits dangerous welfare office conditions

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

A group of caseworkers, recipients, union activists and their supporters from Occupy Philly marched into the North Philadelphia welfare offices on Dec. 21 to demand better conditions.

Layoffs of welfare caseworkers have reduced the assistance available to those in need, while increasing the burden on existing staff. In an atmosphere akin to a pressure cooker, people are forced to wait in long lines for hours on end. To make matters worse, 150,000 Pennsylvania residents — including 43,000 children — have recently been denied Medicaid, and the closing of Employment Advancement Retention Network centers has left welfare recipients without help to find employment.

Backing up the charges of high tensions at the office, one caseworker reported to the protesters that a fight among applicants had taken place that morning. As security personnel were trying to expel us, a fistfight broke out not far away.

Service Employees union Representative Ray Martinez and Cheri Honkala,



Ray Martinez, Service Employees Local 668 organizer speaking at Dec. 21 welfare office protest.

founder of the Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Campaign, explained afterwards why stress levels are so high. “Conditions are already at explosive levels, and it’s going to get much worse next month when 75,000 Pennsylvania residents lose their unemployment benefits,” said Honkala. “Many of those people will be applying

for welfare because there aren’t enough jobs. We demand that DPW [Philadelphia’s Department of Public Welfare] have a plan to change the hostile environment they helped create. If someone gets hurt, they will be partly to blame.”

A press release issued by the protest’s organizers demanded that Congress not cut unemployment benefits until an equal number of good jobs are available. □

Occupy movement exposes Ron Paul’s demagoguery

By Caleb T. Maupin

The “libertarian” movement has never been friendly to the 99%. Its members are not apologetic about wanting to abolish all social programs that aid the people, from Medicaid to food stamps. They want to shut down every government department that in any way limits the excesses of the 1%. These include the Departments of Labor, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, among others.

Libertarians also want to abolish the minimum wage, affirmative action, workplace safety regulations, and all other protections of workers and oppressed people. Their belief is that the power of the capitalists should be totally unrestrained.

With Marxism on the ideological defensive after the collapse of the USSR, many people may be confused about where to turn as the capitalist system crumbles around them. Even those who are of the 99% and who sympathize with that movement might be deceived by the libertarians’ program.

This is even more likely with a libertarian candidate like Ron Paul, whose recent decision to emphasize isolationism in his public image has added to his appeal. He is the only Republican candidate who appears to hold an anti-war position. Paul publicly calls for ending U.S. aid to Israel, closing U.S. military bases around the world, and trimming the massive military budget. He also points out that Iran is no military threat to the United States, and should not be sanctioned.

These are all positions people who want peace and oppose U.S. imperial-

ism support. Without these positions, no one with anti-racist or progressive convictions would even consider supporting Paul.

OWS protests Paul in Iowa

This makes it all the more important and gratifying that the Occupy Wall Street movement, or at least the section of it in Iowa, has taken such a strong position exposing Ron Paul’s real positions.

Activists from OWS were arrested outside Paul’s campaign office in Des Moines on Dec. 29, protesting his reactionary program, specifically his intention to close down the Environmental Protection Agency and allow capitalists to degrade the environment without even the limited restraint the EPA represents. Among those arrested was a 14-year-old woman.

To make sure there was no confusion that OWS had become pro-Democratic Party, others from the same group were arrested that same night at the Democratic Party office in Des Moines. There, they loudly opposed Obama’s refusal to stop home foreclosures and to close Guantanamo Bay. (The Blaze, Dec. 29)

These activists from OWS are clear that neither the Democrats nor the Republicans, nor ultra-right-wing demagogues like Ron Paul, speak in the people’s name.

Paul’s agenda: thoroughly racist, reactionary

Despite Ron Paul’s isolationist rhetoric, his program is loaded with horrifically right-wing and reactionary planks. It includes overturning the Civil Rights

Act of 1964, which Paul has voted to do in Congress, and is not at all apologetic about. He claims it limits the “right” of business owners to discriminate.

Aggressively anti-immigrant, Paul has run television advertisements bragging about how much he intends to persecute undocumented workers and people from what he calls “terrorist” nations.

Paul’s newsletters from the 1990s have become a big scandal because they speak with such extreme hatred about people of color that even mainstream Republicans — especially those now running for president — have denounced them.

That Paul claims not to have personally written them is irrelevant. These newsletters circulated openly bearing Paul’s name. Clearly his movement is neither anti-racist nor for economic justice. Paul opposes the right to abortion, even though he poses as a libertarian and against government intervention.

He hides his racism behind an appeal for “state’s rights,” much as the pro-segregation racist politicians of the 1950s did. Paul claims he is a true believer in “small government” and cannot have government restrict the racists. Meanwhile, he is endorsed by numerous white supremacists, anti-Semitic forces and by the viciously reactionary John Birch Society.

The only way the 99% has ever been able to win concessions from the 1% has been through popular movements and struggles like OWS. It is in these moments, when the power of the ruling class of bankers and capitalists is threatened, that real change is won. □

On The Picket Line

By Sue Davis

RNs to picket in Queens, N.Y.

During lunchtime on Jan. 5, the 350 registered nurses at Flushing Hospital in Queens, N.Y., plan an informational picket to demand the hospital continue its payments to health and pension plans. Represented by the New York State Nurses Association, the RNs say comprehensive benefit plans are needed since they are likely to suffer health problems developed on the job and cannot continue working until 65. Flushing Hospital CEO Robert Levin has offered no wage increases for three years, but has made proposals that would deprive each nurse of \$150,000 in lifetime pension benefits. (www.nysna.org, Dec. 28)

Meanwhile, RNs at three other New York City hospitals averted strikes by negotiating four-year contracts before theirs expired on Dec. 31. The week of Dec. 5, the 3,000 RNs at New York-Presbyterian Hospital approved a contract with no health or pension contributions, improved staffing guidelines and 9 percent raises. On Dec. 27, the 1,300 RNs at St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Hospital reached a tentative agreement addressing their principal concerns: affordable health care with relief for members with high prescription costs; safe staffing levels for patients and nurses; and fair wages. On Dec. 30, the NYSNA negotiated a contract for 2,300 RNs at Montefiore Hospital with safer patient staffing levels, 125 new RN positions, salary increases of 7.5 percent, affordable prescription benefits and a \$750 payment on ratification.

Still in negotiations, RNs at Mount Sinai Hospital have threatened to strike.

Minimum wage increases in 8 states

Eight states — Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Montana, Ohio, Oregon, Vermont and Washington — raised their minimum wage rates in 2012 by 28 to 37 cents, to \$7.64 to \$9.04 an hour. Washington is the first state with a minimum wage that is more than \$9.

Affected are about 1 million minimum-wage workers, predominantly white women over the age of 20, according to the Economic Policy Institute’s analysis of Labor Department data. However, the New York Times observed that “for those workers who do receive raises in the new year, the added income [\$582 to \$770 a year] still will not be enough to push their families above the poverty line.” (Dec. 24)

Eighteen states, the District of Columbia and a handful of cities have set minimum wages higher than the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, often indexed to consumer price increases. On Jan. 1, San Francisco became the first big U.S. city to require that companies pay workers more than \$10 an hour.

According to the National Employment Law Project, labor organizations are planning campaigns to raise the minimum wage in several states this year. However, given new statistics that show half the U.S. population is living either below, at or near poverty level, a national campaign is needed to substantially raise the federal minimum wage so that no workers are living in poverty.

New federal rules to speed unionization votes

The National Labor Relations Board announced Dec. 21 that it has drawn up new rules, effective April 30, to speed union elections and reduce delays by companies challenging the voting process.

First announced last June, the rules have been vociferously denounced by big-business organizations and their Republican mouthpieces in Congress. Indeed, the U.S. Chamber of Congress immediately filed a federal lawsuit to block the rules from taking effect. It charged that revised rules “illegally denied employers their free speech rights by denying them adequate opportunity to make the case against unions.” (NY Times, Dec. 22)

The latest chapter in this ongoing struggle has just begun. Stay tuned. □

How GE bosses used unemployment to beat down wages

By Gene Clancy

The giant General Electric Co. is announcing “good news” for its U.S. workers, and for manufacturing workers across the country. Well, ... sort of.

“We have gotten to a point where making things in America is as viable as making things any place in the world,” said James P. Campbell, president and chief executive of GE’s appliances and lighting division, citing the drop in labor costs as a crucial reason. “They are significantly less with the competitive wage,” he said, “and that is a big help.” (New York Times, Dec. 30)

The “revival” is in an early stage.

Employment is beginning to inch up as new hires start to come aboard faster than older workers leave. But the new people are always at the lower wage scale, except for some specialists.

“We are getting from the company an \$800 million investment in Appliance Park over the next two years, and what we had to do for that investment was accept the ‘competitive wage,’” said Jerry Carney, president of IUE-CWA Local 761.

Even so, GE’s workforce in the U.S. is slightly smaller than its workforce overseas — 133,000 to 154,000. Nearly 80 percent of those in the U.S. are in manufacturing, reflecting GE’s origins. It has 219 factories in this country and 16 more are being built or renovated, including two in Louisville. An additional 230 GE plants are overseas, which helps to explain why 53 percent of the company’s \$150.2 billion in revenue last year — from all sources — was generated abroad, up from 35 percent a decade ago.

GE used loopholes in U.S. tax law to avoid paying any tax whatsoever on its \$14 billion in profits last year. Jeff Immelt, the CEO of GE since 2001, is the chair of President Barack Obama’s Council of Jobs and Competitiveness.

Mr. Carney’s “competitive wage” — which is unfortunately the same term used by GE officials — is really the lower tier of a two-tier system first introduced in the 1980s. In this system, workers were supposed to eventually move to the higher tier, but this system is rapidly disappearing. Already, a majority of workers, those younger and people of color, are condemned to the lower tier of \$14 per hour or less for the foreseeable future. Soon there will be none left in the higher tier.

Racism, anti-communism aided GE’s owners

GE’s search for low-cost labor power is nothing new.

When GE’s Appliance Park complex in Louisville opened in 1954, it was really a huge runaway shop operation. Thousands of jobs were moved from union strongholds in the North — particularly upstate New York — and relocated to Kentucky.

A particular aim was to cut the membership of the United Electrical Workers (UE), a militant union, many of whose class-conscious organizers were communists. Anti-communism drove the UE out of the CIO labor federation in 1949.

Racism was also involved in the company’s moves.

There’s always been a large Black community in Louisville, but GE didn’t automatically hire African Americans.

The National Negro Labor Council — whose spokesperson was future five-term mayor of Detroit, Coleman Young — led a campaign supported by the local NAACP and Black churches to open up jobs at Appliance Park. Louisville’s Ford plant was also forced to hire African Americans as production workers. (See “Organized Labor & the Black Worker 1619-1973” by Philip S. Foner, pages 302-303.) The anti-communists during the Joe McCarthy period destroyed the NNLC for demanding justice for Black workers.

These real gains for African Americans were largely wiped out through massive layoffs. Between 1973 and 1998, GE Chairman “Neutron Jack” Welch and his predecessors axed 16,000 jobs in Louisville. (Time, Nov. 9, 1978) Thousands of Black workers were laid off.

The connection between Black workers, unions and layoffs is an important one. In his book, “Low Wage Capitalism: Colossus with Feet of Clay,” Fred Goldstein notes: “In the 1980s a Black worker was 50 percent more likely to be in a union than a white worker. By 2006 this had fallen to 30 percent. Between 1983 and 2006 the proportion of Black workers represented by a union fell from 31.7 percent to 16 percent. ... Up to the 1990s Black workers were just as likely to have manufacturing jobs as white workers. By 2006 they were

15 percent less likely to have a manufacturing job than whites.” (p.163)

Virtually all of these developments were the direct result of restructuring and outsourcing to oppressed countries overseas, which led to massive layoffs.

Low-cost labor comes home

Now, it seems that the search for low-cost labor has come full circle.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the decline in unit labor costs is dramatic. In manufacturing, the wages and benefits invested in each unit of production have fallen in eight of the past 10 years, with a net decline of 13.6 percentage points.

“We are at an inflection point in manufacturing in terms of relative cost structures,” said Mark M. Zandi, chief economist for Moody’s Analytics. “Ten years ago, it was a no-brainer to locate in China, and now it isn’t so clear whether China is the low-cost place to produce.” (New York Times, Dec. 30)

GE is interested not in helping U.S. workers but in minimizing the total cost of production and maximizing profits. What GE management has done is use the threat of unemployment to bludgeon U.S.-based workers into accepting low wages that leave workers in poverty.

Steven Millies contributed to this article.

West Coast action to support dockworkers Solidarity caravan fights for ILWU



WW PHOTO BILL BOWERS

Dec. 12 port action in Oakland.

Continued from page 1

South Africa, against the war in Iraq, and for the Wisconsin workers’ struggle against union busting. Bay Area ILWU Local 10 backed community protests after the police killing of Oscar Grant in 2009. They honored picket lines in Occupy Oakland’s Nov. 2 general strike and the Dec. 12 West Coast port shutdown.

Caravans and support actions are being organized up and down the West Coast, nationally and internationally, to greet the STX ship coming to be loaded with scab grain. ILWU Local 10 has pledged support for Local 21’s struggle against EGT and their union-busting drive and has funded a bus to Longview. The San Francisco Labor Council has endorsed the solidarity caravan.

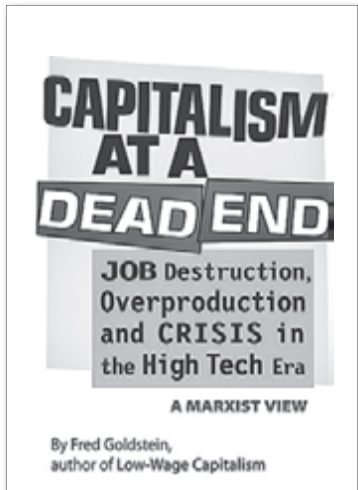
Individuals and organizations are asked to support this critical working-class struggle by joining the caravan or other solidarity actions. Sign up at <http://bailoutpeople.org> to get involved. As soon as official word of the ship’s pending arrival is confirmed, supporters will be contacted by email and phone to let you know

it’s time to mobilize in Longview. If you have a car and are able to take others, or if you would like to be a passenger in a rented bus or van, please indicate that on the website form.

Bunge NA, one of EGT’s parent companies, is headquartered in St. Louis, Mo., with offices in Washington, D.C. and White Plains, N.Y. If you are in these areas, ask your local Occupy group to organize solidarity actions in conjunction with the ship’s arrival in Longview. EGT also has facilities in Chester and Kintyre Flats, Mont. EGT is also building a high-capacity shuttle train loader in Carter, Mont. Bunge has locations all over the Midwest and South. To see if there is a location near you, go to <http://www.bungenorthamerica.com/locations/usa/index.shtml>.

For updates and further information, visit Occupy Oakland at www.westcoastportshutdown.org; Defend ILWU at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/256313837734192/>; or

Occupy Longview at www.facebook.com/ OccupyLongview#!/Occupy-Longview. □



The economic crisis, which began in August 2007 with the collapse of the housing bubble in the U.S. and quickly spread around the world, marked a turning point in the history of capitalism.

It is a turning point which carries great danger for the workers and the oppressed of the world, but at the same time carries great future potential for those with a revolutionary perspective.

Why? Because this is not just a severe capitalist crisis. It is not a crisis which has within it the seeds of its own recovery, as all previous crises since the Great Depression have had.

Pamphlet is available at www.LowWageCapitalism.org and www.workers.org/books
Order from Workers World 55 W. 17 St., 5C, NY, NY 10011
\$2 (plus \$1 shipping)

LOW-WAGE CAPITALISM

What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

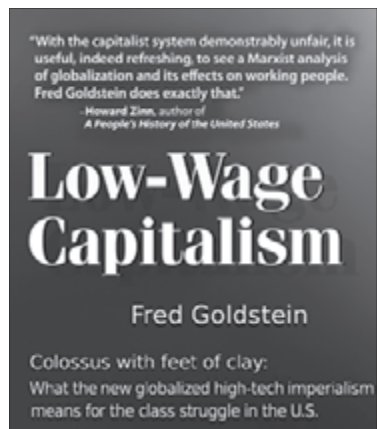
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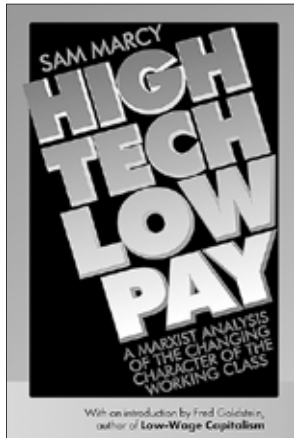


HIGH TECH, LOW PAY

A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class

Twenty years ago Sam Marcy wrote that the scientific-technological revolution is accelerating a shift to lower-paying jobs and to more women, Black and Latino/a workers. Using Marxism as a living tool he analyzes the trends and offers strategies for labor including the occupation of plants. A new introduction by Fred Goldstein explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, that has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence. Available at Amazon & bookstores around the country.

www.workers.org/marcy/hightech/



Pipelines create profits, perils

By Betsey Piette

Not so hidden in the late December “tax deal” was a provision to force a quick decision on the Keystone XL oil pipeline project, which would stretch from the Tar Sands oil extraction project in Alberta, Canada, to the Gulf of Mexico. While first threatening to veto any bill that included the project, President Barack Obama ended up approving the final package with no mention of this environmental threat.

The proposed 1,700-mile pipeline threatens a vital aquifer for millions of people and undermines the rights of many Indigenous nations on whose land it would run. Thousands of people circled the White House in early November to oppose the pipeline.

Trillions of dollars are at stake for U.S. and Canadian companies, including the \$100 billion Koch Industries, one of Canada’s largest crude oil purchasers, shippers and exporters. The Koch brothers also operate Koch Exploration Canada, L.P. devoted to exploring and refining 25 percent of tar sands oil. (Guardian U.K., Sept. 8)

Pipeline promoters claim the project would add 20,000 new jobs. However, an independent Cornell University assessment stated the project might produce between 2,500 to 4,650 temporary jobs lasting two years at best.

Because the project would divert a huge volume of tar sands oil away from Midwest refineries to be sold at higher prices to Gulf Coast and export markets, it would increase prices consumers pay for gasoline and diesel fuel, adding up to \$5 billion to the annual U.S. fuel bill. (U.S. News & World Report, Dec.16)

Lack of safety regulations

As drilling for new sources of natural gas and oil expands around the U.S. and across the globe, construction of new pipelines is sure to follow. Along with this expansion comes growing concern over potential environmental damage and deadly pipeline accidents due to weak oversight and lack of safety rules.

In Pennsylvania, the rapid expansion of drilling for natural gas has spurred pipeline construction, often with no safety rules. In many rural areas — common when it comes to hydraulic fracturing or fracking and moving gas from Marcellus Shale wells — no safety regulations, state or federal, apply. (Philadelphia Inquirer, Dec.11)

Yet federal data indicate that deaths from pipeline accidents are increasing. In 2010 there were 230 gas-line accidents in the U.S., resulting in 21 deaths and 105 injuries. From 1990 to 2009, there were 5,625 accidents resulting in 365 deaths,

1,553 injuries, more than \$4.3 billion in property damage and spillage of over 2.5 million barrels of gas.

As of March 2011, there were 2.4 million miles of natural gas pipelines in the U.S. While mainly in rural areas, many pass through cities. According to Carl Weiner, executive director of the Pipeline Safety Trust, “On average ... there’s a significant incident somewhere about every other day, and someone ends up in the hospital or dead about every nine or 10 days.” (NPR, March 1)

Pipelines are key to the expanding production of shale gas, which now accounts for 34 percent of U.S. production of natural gas, resulting in billions of dollars in profits. Many of these pipelines require clearing hundreds of thousands of acres of forest, resulting in erosion, damage to streams and clogged water wells. Pipeline corporations can build with few if any restrictions from local governments.

Fracking generates a huge volume of gas that is transported in big pipes, running at pressures far greater than traditional lines. The Marcellus Shale region alone, which encompasses large parts of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia, is estimated to contain 410 trillion cubic feet of gas, over 50 percent of the U.S. total.

In Pennsylvania, Gov. Tom Corbett and other politicians are pushing for legislation that would bar local officials from imposing restrictions on gas wells and pipelines in their communities.

The natural gas industry argues that they are bringing jobs to local communities. This sounds similar to promises made by the coal industry. Hundreds of years of coal mining in Pennsylvania have left more than 2,400 miles of streams polluted by abandoned mines and much of the land deforested. While industry owners got rich, more than 31,000 workers died.

Pipeline problems widespread globally

The potential threat posed by the rapidly expanding natural gas industry is being felt round the globe. U.S. companies including Halliburton, Chesapeake Energy, Shell and Exxon Mobil stand to profit at the expense

of local residents and environments.

Puerto Rico’s Gov. Luis Fortuno is promoting a \$450 billion project to build a 92-mile natural gas pipeline, dubbed Vía Verde or the Green Way. The island of Puerto Rico is just 110 miles long.

Opponents call it the Vía de la Muerte — Death Route — because it goes through the center of the island, crossing forests and more than 235 rivers and impacting 32 endangered species. It also presents a risk to over 200,000 people because much of the area is seismically active. Plans call for a 150-foot right of way to be cleared through the forests in the interior mountains. (Democracy Now, June 9) Demonstrations against the pipeline have rocked Puerto Rico.

In South Africa, large energy companies want to drill thousands of natural gas wells using fracking, which requires millions of gallons of water for each gas well, in an area that “sees less rain in some parts than the Mojave Desert.” (New York Times, Dec. 30)

Drilling for shale gas in Indonesia in 2006 led to the eruption of a mud volcano that killed 13 people and left more than 30,000 homeless. In Peru, a U.S.-funded project to export gas from the Amazon rainforest has been plagued by spills.

Back in Pennsylvania, many landowners signed leases to allow drilling on their properties hoping for lucrative royalties, which frequently have not come through. They didn’t realize that pits for holding waste water from drilling would be constructed on their land or that these pits would leak, spilling contaminated liquids that would kill crops and animals.

Drilling is often done within sight of residential areas. Multiple wells are drilled on one site, covering more than one square mile, and some well pads involve compressors running 24/7. Sites may be packed with trucks and industrial equipment. Pipelines are dug across farmland and through areas that were previously forested.

The promise that drilling would bring jobs to the state has also not meant more jobs for local residents. “More than 70 percent of the people working at Marcellus Shale drilling sites come from out of state.” (Centre Daily Times, Feb. 6) □

TOP 10 REASONS

Why the super-rich hate socialism

1. We’re socialites, not socialists.

2. With socialism, we’d be the bottom 1%, not the top 1%.

3. We’re for equity, not equality.

4. We won’t be able to buy and sell politicians under socialism.

5. If socialism takes away our fortunes, who’s going to clean our bathrooms?

6. Workers already run things — they run our households, raise our children, cook our meals and clean up afterwards. They do it all. ...

7. ... And they make everything, too. Production is socialized — we only make profits. So we certainly don’t need socialism.

8. We don’t run society either. We hire stooges in government and private enterprise to do that for us.

9. Under socialism, the little people will be in charge, and that’s just plain wrong. ...

10. ... They’ll probably make us work for a living. Eww, that’s disgusting.

— Paul Wilcox



You who are reading this are our comrades. We’ve been with you in the occupations, from Zuccotti Park to Oakland. We’ve walked a hundred picket lines together. You want us to reach more of your friends, your co-workers, your neighbors, your cell-mates with the truth about capitalism.

You want them to understand that fighting this system is the most important thing they can do with their lives. You want our movement to grow so that, in the words of the old song, “We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old.”

That’s from the old union favorite, “Solidarity Forever.” That’s what WW is all about. Building solidarity among the workers and all the oppressed, worldwide. We’re up against

a profit system that constantly tries to divide and pit us against one another. It hides our achievements while glorifying those who exploit us. But in the pages of Workers World, our sisters and brothers can read about what OUR side is doing to come together against bigotry and oppression in order to WIN.

They can learn some history, too. About how anticolonial revolutions allowed countries like Libya, Iraq and Iran to develop, and why the imperialists fear this so much they try to destroy them. About today’s crisis of global capitalism that isn’t going away because this economic system can no longer absorb the “excess” hundreds of millions of workers left jobless by new technologies.

Workers World is one of the very few U.S.

newspapers on the left that every week puts out both a print and an online edition.

It is the ONLY one that consistently gives a voice to activists in the Black, Latino/a, women’s, youth, lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer and immigrant movements while also standing up against imperialist warmongering.

It is the ONLY one that fights for socialism at home while recognizing and supporting what countries trying to build socialism, like Cuba and Korea, have achieved despite threats, blockades and sanctions.

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And thanks!

The revolutionary socialist vision and Our debt to Occupy Wall Street movement

The following excerpts are from opening remarks by Larry Holmes, First Secretary of Workers World Party, to the WWP national leadership meeting Dec. 17 in New York City. Holmes' First Secretary position was officially ratified at this meeting.

We are in the opening stages of a wholly new epoch.

This epoch in all likelihood will be protracted and long. It will be uneven, it will be explosive, it will be fraught with dangers — all of it necessary to that which we have been waiting so long for: the awakening of our global proletariat, and especially the awakening of that section of the proletariat whose development we are responsible for — the working class of the U.S.

The epoch I am referring to is the beginning of the end of capitalism. The epoch will end with the destruction of capitalism and the expropriation of the capitalist class.

Of course, it is possible that at the opportune time, when the system is at its weakest and the capitalist bourgeoisie is the weakest, our class and its leadership might not be prepared to carry through the revolution.

In that case, capitalism might get another short lease on life, the way a parasite does if it is not stomped out. It is axiomatic for revolutionary Marxists that no matter how much it seems that capitalism will fall apart of its own dead weight and decay, it will not simply fall apart. It will need to be buried. And that process can only be completed by the working class. But that is a caveat.

The important point is that anti-capitalist consciousness is growing on a global basis. It is actually surging. Some of it is incipient, not well articulated; some of it is better articulated; some of it is articulated by those who are not real revolutionaries and who have another agenda with whom we have differences. All of that will be part of the terrain that we are developing and fighting.

The Party and the revolutionary movement and all who are moving in a revolutionary direction should not underestimate the depth of the radicalization of sections of the working class, especially the youth but not only the youth. Because radicalization, especially when it abets the struggle, becomes contagious.

And so, if the Party is ultimately going to play its role in helping our class to move toward what is sometimes called the maximum program — socialist revolution — it will be necessary for us to be very conscious, very meticulous and serious in how we go about it.

There are sections of the world capitalist class that are more aware than even the most militant sections of the working-class movement of the reality that this capitalist crisis is no “garden variety” crisis; but rather something infinitely more profound than all previous crises and more importantly, a crisis from which there is no way out.

This is no small matter because our class and its organizations cannot fight that which it does not fully understand. It goes without saying that we communists must assist the working class and the oppressed in defending all the gains, be they significant or meager gains, that are under relentless attack. However, let there be no illusions — the epochal class struggle that is in the making on a global

level will not be resolved on the basis of concessions or reforms, or a return to some semblance of “capitalist stability.” Those days are over.

It is important, henceforth, for us to see the possibility of socialist revolution — not tomorrow — but neither as merely some idea that has no relevance to the class struggle today. To truly understand how unprecedented and irreversible the present world capitalist crisis is, is to understand that the question of the need for world socialist revolution is not something that can be postponed.

Whatever other work the Party undertakes in the day-to-day class struggle, we will not be of help to our class and only cause more confusion, if we fail to illuminate the road to the socialist revolution.

Significance of Occupy Wall Street movement

The Occupy Wall Street development is symptomatic of this. We have debated inside the Party and in the movement whether or not OWS should have been anticipated. Let's take a look at that. If you just say in the narrowest sense that no one knew how significant Sept. 17 was going to be and what would happen, I suppose you could make a case for that.

In a larger sense, a more true sense, the Occupy movement should have come as no surprise. Why? The OWS development is wholly unique to the unprecedented character of the current global capitalist crisis. And if we had been paying attention — which we have — some of us at least — we would have known that it was in the making. For example, at our last plenum, some of you may recall, we took note of an article that appeared in Forbes magazine shortly after the rebellions in the United Kingdom in the mid-summer, mid-August.

Forbes magazine — not our paper, not some other radical publication — and the article title was “UK riot means global



Larry Holmes

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

class war is coming.” This was several weeks before Sept. 17.

The article is significant because it reflected the thinking of at least some within the world capitalist establishment. The article mostly talked about how high unemployment is, particularly among youth, both oppressed and working-class youth, as well as youth who previously considered themselves somewhat more privileged, how devastating unemployment is and how they are all saddled with enormous college-related debt.

One of the most intriguing, astonishing and gratifying aspects of OWS is that it reflected, at least to some extent, that this is a critical social stratum that by virtue of education and other factors is usually promised a place in capitalism. But now, those days are over. And now, this social stratum in the working class and the middle class that capitalism and imperialism have usually depended on for support is beginning to defect.

This must be a cause for great alarm within the bourgeoisie.

We understood right away that there would be tension between some of this stratum and the oppressed sectors of the working class. Most of the young, white participants in the Occupy uprising knew nothing about racism and the national question because it hasn't been an issue for them.

In the final analysis, however, the rebellion of this heretofore more privileged stratum in the working class and the middle class will ultimately be of help to all the workers and the oppressed of the world.

OWS has sharpened the crisis for the revolutionary movement. It is a crisis for us and our friends and allies. Why? Because even though we are ideologically ahead and can teach the best elements in the Occupy movement things they need to learn about imperialism, about the national question, about the woman question and on and on — in some ways

they are ahead of us.

I am talking in general about a phenomenon that is hard to avoid. It is what happens when the revolutionary movement contracts as a result of an extended and painfully long reactionary period.

Even when you survive such a period, it can't help but affect your thinking. It may make your thinking more conservative, your expectations more conservative, more narrow. In which case you can be surprised by something that signals a break from that period.

I think this is a process the entire working-class movement is going through.

The Occupy Wall Street movement should serve as a wake up call to all who remain committed to a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist direction. The collapse of the Soviet Union, and the developments that led up to it, are easier to understand today as we can more fully appreciate the devastating toll of more than 30 years of worldwide counterrevolution.

Part of that devastating toll has been the degeneration and weakening of the revolutionary socialist orientation.

Degeneration does not happen all at once, overnight, but rather incrementally, almost unconsciously, over an extended period of time and under the pressure of disappointments and frustrations, the causes for which in large part can be traced to stagnation in the working-class movement, demoralization, contraction and fragmentation in the revolutionary movement, and the seemingly endless prevalence of bourgeois triumphalism — a prevalence that has clearly now come to an end.

In some ways, the young, inexperienced and ideologically eclectic makers of the Occupy movement, precisely because they are not burdened by the baggage of past defeats, understand the gravity of the global capitalist crisis and the revolutionary potential that it has opened better than many of us seasoned veteran revolutionary Marxists.

We will not be able to help the OWS movement advance until and unless we catch up to it. □

Community support grows for Boston post office rally

By Frank Neisser
Boston

Community and labor support is growing for the Jan. 14 Rally to Save Community Jobs and Services at the Grove Hall Post Office in the heart of Boston's African-American community. The location is one of the thousands of post offices, many of them in poor and oppressed communities, that have been targeted to be closed by the United States Postal Service.

The post office closings are the keystone of a plan by Congressional right-wingers to lay off up to 200,000 postal workers, destroy union jobs in the communities, and hand these vital and profitable services over to private profiteers.

The rally is being organized in response to a call issued by the newly formed Occupy 4 Jobs Network. Invoking the proposal by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for a mass occupation of Washington, D.C. for jobs, the network has called for national actions on the weekend of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. Postal workers

from numerous cities participated in the network's inaugural meeting, which took place at a People's Assembly in the South Bronx, N.Y., in November.

A Boston planning meeting was hosted by the Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751 on Dec. 19 and attended by Paul Killduff, president of American Postal Workers Union, Boston Metro Area Local 100; Ed Childs, chief shop steward, UNITE-HERE Local 26; and community and labor activists from the Bail Out the People Movement, Women's Fightback Network, Fanmi Lavalas Boston, Occupy 4 Jobs and others. Community planning meetings have been held with Minister Don Muhammad, of Temple 11 of the Nation of Islam, and with Boston City Councilors Charles Yancey and Tito Jackson.

The rally is being called under the general slogan: “Make MLK Day ‘Occupy 4 Jobs Day.’” Demands include:

- No reduction in postal service — keep 6-day delivery;
- No post office closings — expand the

- postal service; don't destroy it;
- Stop privatization — the postal services belong to the people;
- A Works Progress Administration-style jobs program for 30 million people at union wages for all, regardless of immigration status;
- Jobs for youth — not jails; and
- Support for all four postal worker unions, including APWU, the National Association of Letter Carriers, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union and the National Rural Letter Carriers Association.

The flyer for the event, to be translated into Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole and Spanish, explains how the poorest and most vulnerable will be impacted and suffer the most.

To endorse or volunteer to help mobilize, contact Boston Metro Local 100 APWU, 137 South St. 4th Floor, Boston, MA 02111, 617-423-2798; or the Occupy 4 Jobs Network, c/o USW 8751, 25 Colgate Rd., Roslindale, MA 02131, occupy4jobsboston@gmail.com. □

Nigeria declares state of emergency

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A state of emergency was declared by Federal Republic of Nigeria President Goodluck Jonathan on Jan. 1 in the aftermath of a series of bomb attacks on various Christian churches on Christmas. Initial reports indicate that 49 people were killed and scores injured.

The attacks, which have been claimed by the Boko Haram religious organization, follow a pattern of escalating conflict in Africa’s most populous and oil-rich state. The attacks began with a government crackdown on the Islamic group in 2009, when the leader of the organization was killed extrajudiciously by security forces. The Nigerian government and others claim that Boko Haram is linked to al-Qaeda.

The state of emergency has taken effect in the northern state of Bornu, where Boko Haram is said to have its strongest base of support. Most of the nation’s Muslim population is based in the north, with more Christians in the south and east. Other areas impacted include 15 local councils spread out within the Yobe, Niger and Plateau states.

Military units have entered these areas, and in some cases the army has taken over police stations and local government offices. Although many political parties and civil organizations have reportedly supported the state of emergency, others have been more cautious and some are highly critical.

In response to the declaration, the Boko Haram group has reportedly issued an ultimatum for Christians in the northern states to leave the region within 72 hours. The organization has said that it will confront any military operations carried out

by the army during the state of emergency. Boko Haram spokesperson Abul Qaqa told reporters by telephone that “soldiers will only kill innocent Muslims in the local government areas where the state of emergency was declared. We would confront them squarely to protect our brothers.” (Nigerian Vanguard, Jan. 2) During the press briefing the Boko Haram representative spoke in the Hausa language common throughout the north.

History of regional conflict in Nigeria

Regional conflict exists in Nigeria due to the legacy of British imperialism and the current role of the oil industry. A system of indirect rule was enacted when Nigeria was colonized in the late 19th century. This system was designed by the British ruling class to perpetuate colonial, and eventually neocolonial, control over the oil-producing nation. The country won national independence in 1960.

Dating back to the pre-independence period, the Nigerian military has been heavily dominated by people from the north. Between 1966 and 1993, there were successive military coups, with only one four-year period of civilian rule between 1966 and 1999. A civil war took place between 1967 and 1970, when the eastern region attempted to break away and form an independent state known as Biafra. After the defeat of the secessionist movement, the military maintained control until 1979, when the civilian regime took power for four brief years.

The oil industry, which became prominent in the national economy after 1956, saw a surge in production and profitability during the 1970s. Nonetheless, most of the profits from the production and export of oil have not benefited the population as a whole.

With the lack of equitable distribution of resources from the oil industry, unrest has flared in the petroleum-producing regions in the south. Tremendous environmental problems have had a devastating impact in oil-producing areas, particularly the recent Bongo oil spill involving Royal Dutch Shell.

Labor threatens unrest over removal of fuel subsidies

With the worsening worldwide economic crisis intensifying a growing national deficit, the Nigerian government recently canceled fuel subsidies enacted to provide lower prices for personal use of petroleum. Gasoline prices at the pump immediately increased by 116 percent.

Public anger during the New Year holiday prompted the two major labor federations, the Nigerian Labor Congress and the Trade Union Congress, to threaten action against the Jonathan administration.

The Nigerian Vanguard reports that in a joint statement the federations “rejected the increase and asked the public to enforce the N65 per liter price that obtained until yesterday as it promised what it claimed would be a long drawn-out battle with the Goodluck Jonathan administration.” (Jan. 2) The statement asserted that the subsidy cancellation, which coincided with the escalation in regional violence, represented a high degree of insensitivity by the federal government.

According to the Nigerian Vanguard, the labor federations were backed by such civil organizations as the Nigeria Bar Association, the Civil Liberties Organisation, the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties and the Congress for Progressive Change. In addition, a group called the Joint Action Force has called for mass

demonstrations beginning Jan. 3.

U.S. imperialism & Nigerian oil

An increasing amount of oil is being imported from Nigeria and other West African states into the U.S. More than 20 percent of U.S. imports are from the African continent, exceeding the amount imported from the Middle East.

Consequently, the U.S. ruling class is very concerned about developments in the region. In 2008, war games were conducted by the U.S. military that simulated possible instability in Nigeria.

In 2009 during the early days of the Obama administration, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton visited Nigeria and pledged Washington’s commitment to Nigeria’s national security. This move coincided with the increasing role of U.S. Africa Command (Africom), which engaged in its first-ever military operations in Libya.

Over the last two months reports have surfaced of an enhanced U.S. military role in Nigeria. On Nov. 8 the London Guardian reported that the Pentagon had trained Nigerian military forces in counterinsurgency operations.

Internal developments in Nigeria can only be resolved through a national reconciliation process inside the country. The involvement of the Pentagon and the U.S. State Department in the internal affairs of Nigeria will only escalate the conflict and emphasize military solutions.

Economic and regional problems in Nigeria stem from the country’s total integration in the world capitalist system. The only real solution to the underdevelopment and exploitation of Nigerian workers and farmers will come from a formal break with U.S. and Western imperialism as a whole. □

Leaked cables confirm U.S. role in Somalia war

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Bulletin: *Ethiopian troops entered Somalia in December on a mission they claim is independent from the AMISON mission described below, also aimed at destroying the Al-Shabaab Islamist movement. The Ethiopian government said its troops seized Beledweyne on Dec. 31.*

The WikiLeaks website has released cables showing that plans for the Kenyan military invasion of southern Somalia in October to eliminate the Al-Shabaab Islamic resistance movement have been mapped out for nearly two years and refuted claims that the intervention was done without Washington’s knowledge.

This secret plan, dubbed “Jubaland Initiative,” outlined the creation of an artificial state in southern Somalia in an effort to choke off Al-Shabaab from the border areas near Kenya. At a meeting in Ethiopia in January 2010, the Kenyan delegation led by Foreign Affairs Minister Moses Wetang’ula appealed for U.S. support for the operation.

Wikileaks cables also revealed that Wetang’ula had informed U.S. Undersecretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson of the plan to invade Somalia, drive away Al-Shabaab units from the border and then seize the port at Kismayo.

Operation Linda Nchi, the Kenyan invasion of southern Somalia, began on Oct. 16 and involved over 2,000 Kenyan troops. The war has become bogged down due to the lack of logistical coordination, the inclement weather and the formidable resistance to the intervention by Al-Sha-

baab and its supporters inside the country. A Dec. 17 article in the Kenya Daily Nation points out, “The cables also say the military action took years of planning and was not a spontaneous reaction to abductions conducted by the Islamist group on Kenyan soil as repeatedly stated by government officials. The abductions seemed to provide Kenya with a convenient excuse to launch the plan.”

The Kenyan government also justified the invasion based on false allegations that Al-Shabaab planned to stockpile weapons near the border with Kenya and send its fighters into the neighboring country.

Al-Shabaab has denied participation in hijacking ships in the Gulf of Aden and in kidnappings taking place in Kenya. The Islamist organization is now fighting to drive outside forces from Somalia.

Fighting intensifies inside Somalia

The Kenyan army’s drive to eliminate Al-Shabaab bases in southern Somalia has been frustrated. U.S. drone attacks assisting the Kenyan’s efforts have killed hundreds of civilians. The French military has also been responsible for logis-

AFRICA & IMPERIALISM

Articles by Abayomi Azikiwe from the pages of Workers World

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tical and naval support and bombings of Somali territory.

In addition, the Israeli state has deployed drones in Somalia. And the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), which consists of 9,000 Ugandan and Burundian troops, has stepped up military operations against Al-Shabaab in the capital of Mogadishu and other areas in the central regions of the country.

With troops stalled on the ground, the Kenyan Air Force has engaged in bombing operations in southern Somalia. In a military briefing on Dec. 17, Kenyan Col. Cyrus Oguna reported that the Air Force attacked and destroyed a purported Al-Shabaab camp at Wamaitho on Dec. 14. (Mareeg Online, Dec. 18)

Oguna also reported that there were numerous casualties among the Somali people and that no injuries or deaths took place on the Kenyan side. “Kismayo hospital has been overflowing with the injured,” Oguna said during the press briefing.

Reports from other areas of Somalia indicate that clashes are escalating between Al-Shabaab and the Transitional Federal Government’s allied militia known as Ahlu Suna. In Dhusamareb City in the Galgudud region, at least 10 people were killed and a number of others were wounded.

Imperialist intervention cannot stabilize TFG regime

Despite these multiple outside interventions, Somalia is becoming more unstable every day. A split within the TFG parliament has led to the expulsion of the speaker of the assembly, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, who was fired in a dispute over the future of the transition process.

Both the United Nations and the United States have issued statements demanding the end to these internal power struggles within the TFG. The interim regime in Mogadishu could not survive long without the intervention of U.S.-backed forces in the capital and other regions of the country.

U.S. hands off Somalia!

The U.S. military is intervening in Somalia to control political developments in the Horn of Africa as well as other states in East Africa. The Pentagon has been involved in Somalia directly for at least since 1992, when thousands of Marines were sent into the country under the guise of a humanitarian mission to fight famine.

In 1993, large sections of the Somali population rose up against the U.S. and U.N. military, prompting their withdrawal in 1994. Since 2006, Washington has sponsored the Ethiopian and Kenyan governments to militarily intervene on behalf of their interests in Somalia.

At present large flotillas of warships from the U.S., Europe and other states are patrolling the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia under the pretext of fighting piracy. Nonetheless, all these efforts have failed to stabilize Somalia in the interests of Western imperialism.

The problems and political differences in the Horn of Africa must be resolved by the people themselves. Anti-war and anti-imperialist forces in the Western states must oppose U.S. and NATO intervention in East Africa as well as encourage the people and governments of the region to embark upon efforts aimed at finding a lasting and just resolution to the ongoing conflict. □

Egyptian women deepen revolutionary struggle

By Joyce Chediac

All eyes have again turned to Cairo’s Tahrir Square. This time the women of Egypt have set an example for the rest of the world.

Some 10,000 women of all classes and walks of life took to the streets of Cairo on Dec. 20 to protest the military’s misogynistic, violent assaults on Egyptian women. Many demanded that the military step down immediately.

The largest women’s protest in 100 years loudly told Egypt’s military rulers, “We have no fear!” and marked a deepening of the revolutionary struggle.

Many demonstrators carried a photo of the incident that sparked the enraged protest — an unconscious woman being dragged by soldiers on Dec. 17, her head scarf and abaya (black robe) ripped from her body to expose her blue bra. “Egypt was stripped,” the women’s posters read. Videos of the assault, which show a soldier stomping on the woman’s bare chest, went viral.

Women take back Tahrir Square

Women were in the front lines during the 18 days of protests and battles to overthrow Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, and remain at the front in recent demonstrations calling for the military to step down. This has taken tremendous courage.

The Dec. 17 assault of the woman demonstrator was just the latest sexist abuse by the military meant to humiliate, degrade and terrorize women so that they and their families would not protest. In March, government-hired thugs groped and beat women demonstrators calling

for a larger political role for women. That same month the military administered pseudo-medical “virginity tests” to arrested women demonstrators.

The military fueled further outrage by showing no remorse for the Dec. 17 assault and by actually blaming the beaten and stripped woman for not wearing more clothing under her abaya.

These actions sparked the massive and historic demonstration of enraged women who took back Tahrir Square.

Organized on Twitter and Facebook, the protest began with a few hundred women. “The crowd seemed to grow at each step as the women marched, calling up to the apartment buildings lining the streets to urge others to join them. ... ‘If you don’t leave your house today to confront the militias of [army chief] Tantawi, you will leave your house tomorrow so they can rape your daughter,’ one sign read.” (New York Times, Dec. 21)

Protestors chanted, “Where are the soldiers. We are here!” and “Freedom! Freedom!” When they returned to the square, they were 10,000 strong. (Al Ahram, Dec. 21) Mothers brought their daughters and sons.

Clinton statement seeks to divert struggle

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton issued a statement condemning the Dec. 17 military attack as “disgrac[ing] the state and its uniform.” This was more a response to the mass anger of Egypt’s women than to the assault. Clinton’s remarks are a spin meant to separate the U.S. government from the military, to which it gives \$1.3 billion annually.

Clinton did not condemn the Egypt-

tian military’s systematic harassment of women *before* Egyptian women expressed their anger. Nor did she oppose the constant violence against women and their economic marginalization under Mubarak, whom Washington financed for 30 years. In 2005, several female protesters were stripped naked and assaulted by police-linked thugs in an effort to terrorize women and keep them away from political participation. There was no criticism from the U.S. then.

Clinton’s statement was not motivated by concern for Egypt’s women any more than the U.S. government’s opposition to Egypt’s recent closing of U.S.-financed nongovernmental organizations reflects a concern for human rights. Washington is trying to maneuver with all sides in this ongoing, profound struggle in the hope that it can keep Egypt in the imperialist camp, no matter who gains power or electoral office.

NGOs ‘part of U.S. combat team’

Washington immediately roared its objection when the Egyptian military shut down three NGOs financed by the U.S. government on Dec. 29. The National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute have ties to the U.S. Congress and are described as “democracy building.” Freedom House, the third group, trains journalists. Closing them violates Egyptians’ human rights, the Pentagon said.

This is a falling out among thieves. Egypt’s generals want to maintain their perks. Washington wants to use the NGOs to build a pro-U.S. secular opposition to the generals in case they can’t hold on to power. These NGOs are meant to develop

an alternative pro-U.S leadership that implements Washington’s policies.

This is the way U.S.-backed NGOs worked in Iraq, where women bear the brunt of two U.S. wars and a U.S. occupation. In “City of Widows: An Iraqi Woman’s Account of War and Resistance,” author Haifa Zangana quotes former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, who in 2001 called NGOs “an important part of our combat team.” Zangana sees the U.S. NGOs as “civil society organizations intended to be the ‘soft occupiers.’”

The goal of the U.S. government is to hijack the people’s struggle in order to keep Egypt in the imperialist camp. It is especially concerned with continuing the blockade of Gaza and with keeping Egypt in the peace treaty it signed with Israel, which many feel violates Egyptian sovereignty.

Occupy movement shows solidarity

In marked contrast, the Occupy Wall Street movement has shown real solidarity with Egyptian women — solidarity based on common interests. At a Dec. 20 demonstration in Hartford, Conn., one sign read, “Oppression of Egyptian People = Oppression of Occupy Wall Street.” Another pointed out that the same U.S.-made tear gas rains down on protesters in Cairo and Oakland, Calif.

Women of Occupy Wall Street issued a statement on Dec. 21 condemning “the systematic targeting, marginalization, silencing and violence against women by anyone, especially the military authorities.” The statement praised the courage of Egyptian women, adding, “Women are powerful and essential forces in revolutions. Your power and courage [are] incredibly inspiring.” □

Washington debates Afghan occupation as costs of war grow

By G. Dunkel

There is a muffled debate going on in Washington’s halls of power over whether and how to pursue the U.S.-NATO war on Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the government of neighboring Pakistan is blockading a military supply route vital to U.S. troops.

Commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, Gen. John Allen, told the New York Times on Dec. 20 that significant U.S. troops would remain even past the current withdrawal date of 2014. A few days later, Afghan President Hamid Karzai announced, under pressure from Washington, that he agreed with allowing the Taliban to set up an office in Qatar to negotiate. (ABC News, Dec. 30)

There is significant ruling-class support for negotiations. Both the Carnegie Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund helped finance a recent detailed proposal from the Century Foundation called, “Afghanistan: Negotiating Peace,” on what a peace agreement in Afghanistan would entail.

It is unclear if all Taliban factions, both in Afghanistan and Pakistan, are willing to negotiate.

By allowing the Taliban to set up an office, Washington is admitting that the U.S. military and its allies cannot defeat the Afghan resistance strategically. This is true despite the approximately 98,000 U.S. troops occupying Afghanistan, along with 90,400 Department of Defense con-

tractors and 30,000 soldiers from allies, like France and Germany. (Congressional Research Service, R40764)

The CRS figures are just boots-on-the-ground — they exclude Special Forces, naval and air force personnel assigned to the war theater. The CRS may also underestimate the number of mercenaries, a more accurate name for personnel that the DoD calls “contractors.”

Costs for maintaining current troop levels past 2014 would be high. As of March 18, Congress had approved \$1.28 trillion for all the mainly military operations Washington justified as a response to the Sept. 11, 2001 events. About \$444 billion of that was spent in Afghanistan. Using the troop reduction forecasts in President Barack Obama’s 2014 “withdrawal plan,” the projected costs for all these operations through 2021 would total \$1.8 trillion. This would still leave thousands of “advisers and trainers” on the ground. (CRS, RL33110)

Currently, the DoD is spending about \$6.7 billion a month in Afghanistan. Thus, maintaining current levels until 2021 would cost about \$250 billion to \$300 billion more, bringing up the total to nearly \$2 trillion.

These figures are just what the DoD is willing to admit it spent. Nobel economist Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda Barnes in their book focusing on Iraq, “The Three Trillion Dollar War,” three years ago estimated the cost to the U.S. at \$3 trillion

to \$5 trillion. Recently, Stiglitz estimated another \$600 billion to \$900 billion in future disability payments and health care costs.

The cost and impact of 10 years of fighting on Afghanistan itself have not been estimated, since it is impossible to safely gather statistics there. Regarding the life of the population, the U.N. Human Development Index, which broadly measures the welfare of a country’s people, ranks Afghanistan 181st out of 182 countries. Maternal deaths in childbirth — 1,600 to 2,000 per 100,000 births — are the worst in the world. It also has the highest proportion of people disabled from land mines and from polio. (Barnett Rubin, “The Fragmentation of Afghanistan,” p. xi)

Since the CSR did its estimates, a new factor will add to the future costs of the occupation of Afghanistan: Pakistan’s closure of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border

to U.S. supply convoys, which began Nov. 27. Pakistan imposed this blockade after U.S. air strikes killed 24 Pakistani soldiers a few days earlier. Washington refused to apologize, and the Pakistani people started blocking deliveries.

After earlier temporary closures, the Pentagon reported that 30 percent of its supplies were coming through Pakistan. Another 30 percent of these supplies are flown in, the rest come by truck and train from Russia’s ports through much of the Eurasian land mass, and arrive in Afghanistan through Uzbekistan or Tajikistan. On an NPR broadcast on Dec. 25, one U.S. troop said that a gallon of fuel delivered that way to an isolated post cost \$100 or more. Following this route will escalate costs.

A continued blockade will escalate the costs of war even as the U.S. Congress tries to impose “austerity” on all social programs at home and the economy stagnates. □



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HAITI: two years after earthquake

Ever since Haiti was established as the first Black republic in the Western Hemisphere — by carrying out a heroic military slave uprising against the country's slave masters in 1804 — it has suffered unimaginable superexploitation and poverty comparable to that imposed on poorer African countries. The French colonizers made billions upon billions in profits from slave labor and theft of Haitian resources. These profits helped to lay the foundation for France becoming the imperialist power it is today.

The Haitian people received little to no economic compensation for the racist oppression they suffered at the hands of the French. In fact, when the U.S. sent its marines to occupy Haiti from 1915 until 1934, a devastating crisis was imposed in which at least 40 percent of the Haitian national income went toward debt repayment to France and the U.S., rather than toward rebuilding Haiti. The French pushed an excuse of “financial losses” following its military defeat in Haiti.

The Haitian debt crisis was in reality punishment by these imperialists against Haiti for the 1804 struggle for total independence and sovereignty. Haiti is currently owned lock, stock and barrel by imperialist banks, with austerity and debt holding back much-needed development and social advancement in all areas of life.

It is important to understand this historical reality on the two-year anniversary of the terrible earthquake that decimated especially the neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capitol, on Jan. 12, 2010. An estimated 100,000 to 500,000 Haitian people died during the earthquake, mainly due to the country's poor infrastructure — including lack of adequate housing, water,

medical care and access to roads.

A month following the earthquake, foreign ministers from various capitalist countries called a “Friends of Haiti” conference in Montreal, headed by former U.S. President Bill Clinton, to discuss the “rebuilding” of Haiti. In reality, this conference was sponsored by corporate vultures like General Electric, Caterpillar and Deere, along with the World Bank, which saw an opportunity to make superprofits off of Haitian suffering by making promises to shore up the private sector.

Two years after the earthquake, there are still 500,000 homeless Haitians barely surviving in dilapidated tents and shacks. To add insult to injury, Minustah, a U.S.-supported occupation under the guise of the United Nations, introduced cholera into the country. Now an epidemic, cholera has killed thousands of Haitians over the past year, while Minustah has repressed any justified uprisings against inhumane living conditions.

It is important for the worldwide progressive movement to keep Haiti uppermost on its anti-imperialist agenda. The Haitian people need and welcome genuine solidarity as they continue to find ways to resist military intervention and capitalist exploitation. This includes the Haitian struggle in New York finding allies among the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Another form of solidarity with Haiti is for the movement to demand the cancellation of the country's unjust debt. The movement should demand that reparations in the trillions of dollars be paid to the Haitian people to rebuild their nation in any way they see fit, and not for a U.N. occupation that serves imperialist interests. □

Saluting CUBA: where there's no 1%

Cuba — where the 99% took the power away from the 1% — marked the 53rd anniversary of its revolution on Jan. 1.

We send the Cuban Communist Party warm socialist greetings and congratulations. The gigantic advances in health care, education, human solidarity and development, for which socialist Cuba is so well known, have been achieved despite the boot heel of the U.S. imperialist blockade, subversion, terrorism and overt attacks meant to redominate the comparatively small island.

Twenty years ago the revolution survived an unprecedented blow after its major socialist trading partner, the Soviet Union, was overwhelmed by imperialism and a newly installed bourgeoisie reinstituted capitalist economic relations throughout all the former Soviet republics. That was supposed to be the end of history. But today it is the capitalist system that is at a dead end, and more and more people around the world see socialism as the only alternative for humanity.

Following some easing of the U.S. ban on travel to Cuba, the Tempe, Ariz. Chamber of Commerce just announced it is sending a delegation there. National Geographic has also received State Department permission to send two dozen groups of 30 people each. However, groups must still get a license from the U.S. government, and travelers are barred from spending money there.

The U.S. is the only country to impose such draconian restrictions on travel to Cuba, which received 2.5 million foreign visitors last year, many from Canada and Europe as well as Latin America.

Those who visit Cuba will find a country where the workers and their independent union, Central de Trabajadores de Cuba, discuss every new government plan, including the 2012 national budget. Can we imagine what would happen in a city like Detroit, for example, if every workplace debated that city's budget — which has been bled dry by the banks? If the workers and poor had a real voice on whether neighborhoods could be devastated by foreclosures? If students got to decide whether education should be free, or if they should instead be saddled with debt while preparing for jobs that no longer exist?

Finally, let's not forget that five of Cuba's heroes — Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González — have been unjustly held by the U.S. for 13 years. Four are still in U.S. prisons and one, René González, was officially released but is not free to return to his homeland. Also, his spouse, Olga Salanueva, is still cruelly denied a visa to visit him. It is time for the U.S. administration to demonstrate the humanitarianism that it professes by freeing the Cuban Five so they can return home.

Long live the Cuban Revolution! □

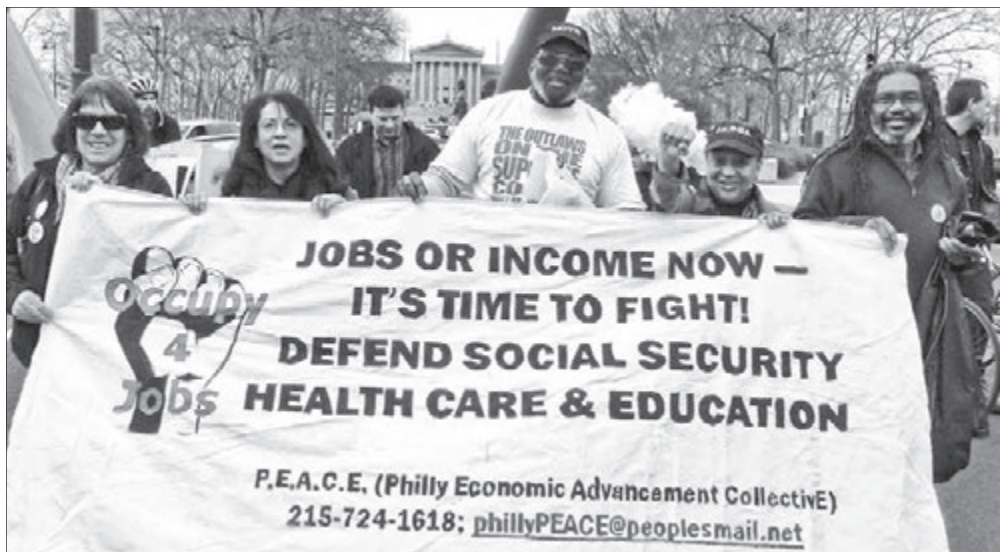
FREE THE CUBAN 5

Unjustly held in U.S. prisons for more than 13 years



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez and Fernando González Llort. Rene González Sehwerert, while recently released, is still being forced to remain in the U.S. against his will.

Occupy Philly marches in New Year



WW PHOTOS: JOE PIETTE

About 200 Occupy Philadelphia participants came out to show their strength and to commemorate a year of global uprising on Dec. 31. They marched from the Philadelphia Museum of Art to the wealthy Rittenhouse Square district, chanting and singing 99%-themed songs to the tune of popular holiday carols. Philadelphia Economic Advancement Collective members participated as well.

— Michael Z. Ladson



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Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA



Understanding the ‘problem’ of Korea

Following is a talk given by Deirdre Griswold to a Workers World Party public forum on Dec. 22 in New York.

I’m sure you all have heard the news about the death of the leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Kim Jong Il. But you didn’t just get the news; you got it packaged in a wave of propaganda against the DPRK.

What I want to focus on is to define the “problem” of Korea, first from the point of view of U.S. imperialism. For them, the problem can be briefly described as this: How can they crush the Korean Revolution?

Forgive me as I go over some history, because it is absolutely necessary to know what happened in order to understand Korea today.

The U.S. has been trying to crush the Korean Revolution for 66 years, since 1945 when they first rushed troops to Korea to take command as the Japanese empire was crumbling at the end of World War II. These U.S. troops occupied the south, with ambitions to soon take over the north.

In the northern part of Korea, however, there was an indigenous liberation movement based in the people. Soviet troops helped this movement, led by Kim Il Sung, to defeat the Japanese colonial rulers in the north. For those of you more familiar with the history of the Vietnam struggle, Kim Il Sung was like the Ho Chi Minh of Korea. He had been organizing against the colonial oppressors since he was a teenager. His revolutionary guerrilla army helped the workers and farmers set up their own councils, which took the power away from the Japanese and their collaborators among the bourgeoisie and the landlords. It was a people’s revolution in the north.

The Korean people as a whole wanted to unite and rebuild their war-torn country. Both U.S. and Soviet troops were supposed to withdraw within three years so Korea could be reunified. The Soviet Union withdrew its troops from the north in 1948, as scheduled. But the U.S. has kept its troops in the south ever since. That same year the U.S. sabotaged the reunification of Korea, picking a stooge named Syngman Rhee, who had sat out the war in the U.S., and anointing him as president of a newly created south Korea.

It was only after that betrayal by the U.S. of plans to reunify north and south that the revolutionary forces in the north declared the founding of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Two years later, the U.S. invaded the DPRK in an all-out war. The Truman administration eventually sent hundreds of thousands of ground troops to Korea and bombed every building above one story in the north. Nevertheless, the fierce resistance of the Korean People’s Army was able to inflict amazing blows on the mighty Pentagon.

The Koreans were the only people to ever have captured a U.S. Army General — Gen. William Dean. And they forced U.S. troops to make their longest strategic withdrawal in history — some 78 miles, from deep inside the north to below the military demarcation line.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Oliver Smith tried to put a happy face on this defeat, saying: “We are not retreating — we are just advancing in a different direction.”

You can see in this general’s words how the outcome of the Korean War was a humiliating defeat for U.S. imperialism, which viewed itself after World War II as the supreme power in the Pacific. With the Cold War, which had become a hot

war in Korea, the U.S. was going to roll back the revolutionary movements not only in Korea but everywhere that the people were in motion: the Philippines, Malaya, Indonesia, Indochina and especially China itself.

But it didn’t happen. For the first time in U.S. history, all they got was a stalemate in Korea. So they have stayed in south Korea ever since, refusing to sign a peace treaty and trying in every way to inflict damage and pain on the revolutionary regime in the north.

And over all these years, the Korean people have continued to resist. And they have remained unified behind their leaders — which is a big part of the problem for imperialism.

What our movement must do

What is the second problem, the problem for Workers World Party, as well as for all revolutionaries who are anti-capitalist, who support socialist revolutions as well as the national liberation struggles of oppressed countries against imperialism?

Our problem is this: How can we best **defend** the Korean Revolution? It has survived more than six decades of unrelenting imperialist hostility, during a time in world history when the imperialists succeeded in pushing back so many gains made by the workers and oppressed. They brought down the Soviet Union and the workers’ states of Eastern Europe. They have rolled back many, many national liberation movements. They forced China to open up to capitalist investment.

Many countries that had ousted colonial rule after valiant struggles to reclaim their territory have fallen into the clutches of finance capital and neoliberalism. And where they didn’t succumb peacefully, the U.S. with its imperialist allies have carried out new invasions, like against Iraq and Libya, to impose their domination once again.

Now, after fattening off the sweat and resources of the whole world, the ruling classes of the U.S., Europe and Japan are turning on the workers at home, tightening the screws of exploitation to prevent the collapse of their chaotic and destructive system.

This is the world context in which we have to view the Korean people’s continuing struggle to build socialism while defending their hard-won sovereignty.

The paramount problem for us revolutionaries, us communists, is: How do we best **defend** the Korean Revolution? All other questions are secondary.

And how do we do it in this country, the United States, where poisonous hostility toward the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea permeates every area of public discourse? Have you ever heard anything good about the DPRK on television, in the corporate newspapers, on radio, or in columns, magazines, movies, etc.? Everything they say is negative, degrading, poisonous.

There has been a full-court press to demonize the Korean Revolution, especially by attacking its leaders. All the niceties of diplomacy are disregarded when it comes to Korea. Any north Korean who is elevated to leadership is belittled and abused here. The language is not only personally insulting to the highest degree but is totally subjective. You have all heard it, and I’m not going to dignify such garbage talk by repeating it here.

Where does this hostility come from?

This is the hostility of the slave masters toward people who resist being enslaved. It’s the hostility of the bosses toward workers who are demanding a union. The ruling class uses slander and outright lies

to turn the public against those it wants to destroy.

Koreans’ allegiance to their leaders

It is particularly galling to them that the Workers’ Party of Korea and the Supreme People’s Assembly continue to choose descendants of Kim Il Sung to represent the state in the highest capacity. We should understand this allegiance to Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il and now Kim Jong Un. Selecting these leaders is how the Korean revolutionaries tell all the forces of reaction, in the U.S., in south Korea, everywhere, that the DPRK will not depart from its revolutionary traditions. It will not bow down before the “public opinion” created by foreign imperialists. It remains true to the ideals that so many generations of Koreans have fought and sacrificed for.

When Kim Il Sung died in 1994, there was a flurry of speculation in the capitalist media. Would there be a power struggle, would a faction emerge that wanted to accommodate with the West? We hear the same thing today, with the death of Kim Jong Il, who was a son of the legendary Kim Il Sung. The media here express scorn that the party has decided he is to be replaced by his son, Kim Jong Un. But is that really the issue? How many U.S. presidents have been relatives of other U.S. presidents? [Audience replies: “Bush! Roosevelt! Adams!”]

The DPRK has many seasoned revolutionary leaders, who have learned how to deal with the U.S. militarily, diplomatically and politically. They supported Kim Jong Il’s difficult decision to put defense of the DPRK first, at a time when the Bush administration had added Korea to its ridiculous “Axis of Evil” — which really was a list of countries the U.S. intended to invade.

Now the leaders and the country are united behind Kim Jong Un, and because of that there is no doubt that he will continue the path set by the Korean Revolution to guard at all costs the sovereignty of the DPRK and its right to the social system of its own choosing.

Let’s talk about political leaders. Do the political leaders in the United States do what the people want?

In the U.S., there is high productivity, but half the population of this country has now been officially classified as either poor or “near poor” — meaning they can easily lose the little they have if they become unemployed. U.S. corporations make billions of dollars exploiting people all over the world, but that doesn’t make the people here rich, only the 1%.

According to many opinion polls, the people here don’t want foreign wars, but they never stop. People don’t want tax breaks for the rich, but the rich get them anyway. The people want affordable health care and good schools. They want a government jobs program. They are getting none of these things.

People don’t trust the politicians and know that they work for the rich. This is how capitalist “democracy” works, where the politicians are nothing but paid agents of the bankers and billionaires. That is not how politics are conducted in Korea, where the wealth of society is publicly owned and is not in the hands of a capitalist ruling class.

The DPRK is a developing country that was literally destroyed by the U.S. in the 1950-53 war, but it never gave in. It was able to rebuild after the war and thrived economically in the 1960s and 1970s, but it has had to spend much of its resources on defense. It has a food problem because it is a mountainous, far north country with a short growing season. Some 80 percent of its territory is high mountains and narrow valleys.

Before Korea was divided, much of the food consumed in the north came from the south, just as most of the fresh food we eat here comes from southern states. But the U.S. has created a dead zone of razor wire and land mines between the two halves of Korea, preventing the exchange of goods. It has imposed sanctions on Korea and forced other countries to obey U.N. sanctions that the U.S. pushed through the Security Council.

So how do we in the United States go about defending the DPRK?

By telling the truth about this valiant country that has resisted U.S. imperialist aggression for 63 years.

We tell it again and again and again, until the people finally understand it. There was very low political consciousness in the United States in the 1950s, when the U.S. launched its war against Korea. The imperialists had a free hand to go anywhere. Today, consciousness is rising and imperialism is losing ground in the world.

The contradictions inherent in capitalism itself are being felt at home — in unemployment, especially among young people, who have the highest jobless rate; in people losing their homes to foreclosure and eviction; in increased suffering and want in a country where 9 million housing units sit empty and food is thrown away because malnourished people cannot afford to buy it.

The people here are finally beginning to understand that military victories for imperialism only weaken our class, while victories for the workers and oppressed in other countries strengthen our class here at home in our struggle against the greedy few.

It is in this spirit of class solidarity that Workers World Party thanks the people of the DPRK for their long and heroic struggle. We remember with great admiration the achievements of leaders like Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. And we congratulate Kim Jong Un for having taken on the job of defending and guiding the glorious and continuing Korean Revolution. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

Includes: **Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination** Larry Holmes

Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy

Black Youth: Repression & Resistance Leilani Dowell

The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead

Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle

for Human Rights & Global Justice! Saladin Muhammad

Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery,

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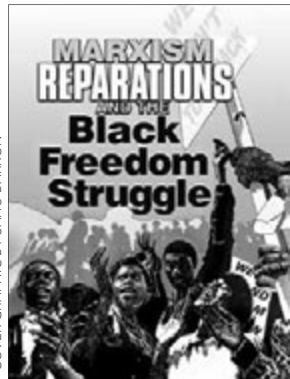
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El capitalismo no puede satisfacer las necesidades humanas

La mitad de EE.UU. es pobre

Karl Marx tenía razón: la brecha crece entre el 99% y el 1%

Por Fred Goldstein

El número de personas en los EE.UU. que son oficialmente pobres o “casi pobres” se ha convertido en un tema de controversia.

La Oficina del Censo ha cambiado el método por el cual mide la pobreza oficial. Ahora las diferencias regionales son tomadas en cuenta al calcular el costo de mantener una familia, así como la adición de cualquier asistencia del gobierno — como los cupones de alimento — a los ingresos de una familia, mientras que le restan los gastos médicos, de transporte, de cuidado infantil y otros.

El periódico The New York Times pidió las cifras basadas en estos nuevos métodos de cálculo oficial de pobreza a la Oficina del Censo. El nuevo porcentaje era impactante. El Times publicó sus conclusiones en noviembre. Declaró que el número de personas que vive en la pobreza es de 100 millones, o sea una de cada tres personas en los EE.UU.

Pero un mes más tarde, en diciembre, la agencia Prensa Asociada publicó sus conclusiones basadas en los nuevos cálculos. Encontró que 150 millones — lo que significa que casi una de cada dos personas — era pobre o “casi pobre”. Casi pobre significa tener que luchar para poder pagar las cuentas.

Esto fue aún más impactante.

Ambas cifras se basaron en los mismos resultados de la Oficina del Censo. La diferencia es que el primer estudio contó a todas las personas que viven en el 150 por ciento o menos del nivel de pobreza. El nivel oficial de pobreza para una familia de cuatro con dos niños/as, en virtud de las nuevas medidas adoptadas por la Oficina de Censo, se fijó en un ingreso anual de \$24.343.

El segundo estudio, utilizando la misma base de datos, incluía a las personas que viven en el 200 por ciento o menos del nivel de pobreza. Encontró que una familia de cuatro personas, incluyendo a dos niños/as, con un ingreso anual de \$48.686 aún luchaba por sobrevivir y vivía en tal precariedad que pronto podría irse a pique. Cualquiera que esté tratando de mantener unida a una familia de cuatro con estos ingresos sin duda estará de acuerdo con la definición más amplia.

La Oficina del Censo se apresuró a “aclarar” la situación, declarando que era erróneo concluir que la mitad de las personas en los EE.UU. era pobre o “casi pobre”. De todos modos, decían que el gobierno no tiene una definición de “ingresos bajos” o de “casi pobres”, por lo que todo el debate estaba equivocado. Esta discusión rápidamente desapareció de los grandes medios de comunicación.

‘No se necesita un meteorólogo’

No importa qué número se adopte, el hecho es que los salarios reales han estado cayendo durante 30 años conforme los capitalistas integran nuevas tecnologías, aceleran el trabajo y obligan a millones de obreros/as a trabajar a tiempo parcial. Desde que la crisis económica se inició en

agosto del 2007, los salarios han caído aún más drásticamente. Por lo menos 30 millones están desempleados/as o subempleados/as. Millones de personas han sido forzadas fuera de sus hogares al ejecutar sus hipotecas. Y la asistencia del gobierno está siendo recortada hasta el hueso a nivel federal, estatal y local.

En otras palabras, el debate sobre cuánta pobreza existe según las estadísticas del gobierno es sólo un debate sobre las definiciones del gobierno y las categorías de la Oficina del Censo. Independientemente, la pobreza y el sufrimiento son reales y están aumentando. Y aún según las estadísticas oficiales, la pobreza en Estados Unidos aumentó por 2,6 millones entre 2009 y 2010.

Como dice el refrán, ‘no se necesita un meteorólogo’ para saber en qué dirección sopla el viento. La pobreza es parte integral del capitalismo. Durante una crisis económica con esta duración y gravedad, la pobreza crece más profunda y ampliamente.

Karl Marx sobre el 1% y el 99 %

Cabe reiterar que el crecimiento de la pobreza es parte del capitalismo. De hecho, Karl Marx, al escribir el “Manifiesto Comunista” en 1848, presagió la descripción del 1% frente al 99%.

Argumentando en contra de los capitalistas, que se quejaban sobre el pro-

grama comunista de abolir la propiedad privada en los medios de producción, Marx escribió:

“Os aterráis de que queramos abolir la propiedad privada, ¡cómo si ya en el seno de vuestra sociedad actual, la propiedad privada no estuviese abolida para nueve décimas partes de la población, como si no existiese precisamente a costa de no existir para esas nueve décimas partes! ¿Qué es, pues, lo que en rigor nos reprocháis? Querer destruir un régimen de propiedad que tiene por necesaria condición el despojo de la inmensa mayoría de la sociedad.

“Nos reprocháis, para decirlo de una vez, querer abolir vuestra propiedad. Pues sí, a eso es a lo que aspiramos”.

Marx escribió sobre la décima parte de la población frente a las nueve décimas partes durante las primeras etapas del capitalismo, antes de que la gran concentración de riquezas, que él previó, hubiera alcanzado las proporciones del siglo XXI. De hecho, hoy sólo una pequeña fracción del 1%, los multimillonarios, efectivamente controlan la riqueza.

Marx escribió hace 160 años, antes de la era del capital financiero con sus fondos de cobertura y sus riquezas inimaginables. Pero aunque escribió del 10 por ciento y del 90 por ciento, él señaló y analizó cómo la tendencia del capitalismo es concentrar la riqueza en menos y me-

nos manos, dejando a las masas sin ninguna propiedad y viviendo en la pobreza.

Después de 20 años más de estudiar el capitalismo, Marx en 1867 escribió en “El Capital”, Tomo I, capítulo 25, sobre la “Ley General de acumulación capitalista”. Describió el papel de la tecnología en la creación de pobreza y de un número creciente de trabajadores/as desempleados/as, que él llamó “el ejército de reserva de desempleados”:

“La ley, finalmente, que mantiene un equilibrio constante entre la sobrepoblación relativa o ejército industrial de reserva y el volumen e intensidad de la acumulación, encadena el obrero al capital con grillos más firmes que las cuñas con que Hefesto aseguró a Prometeo en la roca. Esta ley produce una acumulación de miseria proporcionada a la acumulación de capital. La acumulación de riqueza en un polo es al propio tiempo, pues, acumulación de miseria, tormentos de trabajo, esclavitud, ignorancia, embrutecimiento y degradación moral en el polo opuesto, esto es, donde se halla la clase que produce su propio producto como capital.” [Se pueden leer “El Manifiesto Comunista” y “El Capital” en marxists.org/archive.] [Nota de traducción: Capítulo XXIII, del Libro I en <http://www.ucm.es>]

Pero Marx no solamente describió la pobreza y la desigualdad en riquezas. Él analizó sus orígenes en la relación del trabajo asalariado al capital. Demostró que el sistema de ganancias, el sistema de propiedad privada, se basa en los/as trabajadores/as que venden su fuerza de trabajo a los empresarios que la utilizan para aumentar su capital, sus ganancias y su riqueza personal.

Esto es tan cierto hoy como lo era en 1848 y 1867. Las mismas leyes descritas por Marx han provocado la crisis económica mundial que estamos viviendo. Las leyes del capitalismo, especialmente el permanente impulso competitivo inherente por obtener ganancias, también impulsan la tecnología, la aceleración del trabajo, los sueldos bajos, la sobreproducción, y a la larga, la destrucción de los empleos y los ingresos para las masas.

La polarización de la sociedad en 1% y 99% es sistémica. Y es el sistema el que en última instancia debe ser destruido.

Entretanto, el movimiento de Ocupar Wall Street ha empujado a la sociedad hacia un gran paso adelante al exponer a los ricos y tomar medidas contra ellos. Al hacerlo, ha despertado a grandes sectores de la sociedad a que se den cuenta de que su pobreza, sus empleos sin oportunidades de progresar, su lucha por sobrevivir, no son su culpa, sino la culpa del sistema capitalista.

Así, el OWS ha legitimado y ampliamente difundido la oposición al sistema, moviéndonos a todos/as a un paso más cerca de poder deshacerse de la totalidad del 1% y establecer el dominio del 99% — es decir, eliminar la autocrática clase dominante capitalista y establecer la autoridad democrática de los/as trabajadores/as y los/as oprimidos/as. □



En sus días finales, Dr King planificaba una ocupación masiva para demandar trabajos

EN EL DÍA DE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

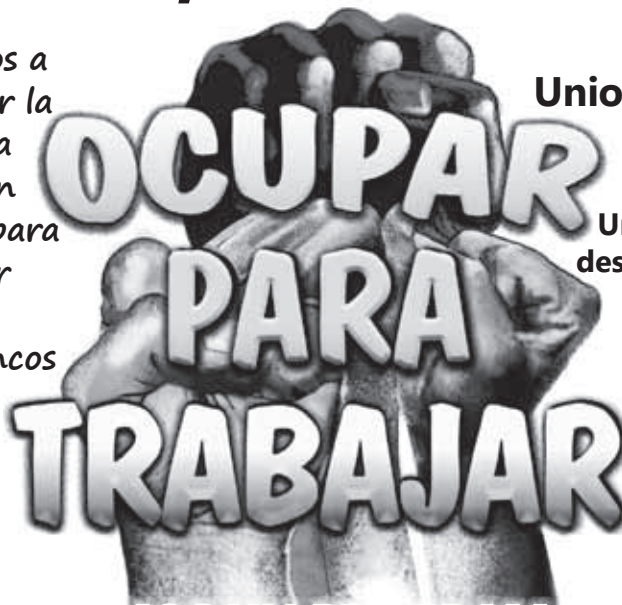
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